



*By Guy Forstrom  
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**M**y first experience with Model A's was back in 1968. I was 15. I bought a 1930 Tudor from a farmer friend of my Grandpa's for \$275, and drove it off the farm. In 1978 I took a job with Breitung Township Public Works Department in Quinnesec, Upper Peninsula of Michigan. We are just a couple of miles from where the Ford Motor Company Woody Body Plant was in Iron Mountain/Kingsford, Michigan. I also became a volunteer fireman at that time. Of course one of the first things I noticed was a 1930 Model AA Fire truck sitting in the back room of the Public Works garage. The story was that this was one of two Fire trucks that had been used at the Ford Body Plant here. But even the old timers

around town didn't know for sure. We will get to more of this later. The old fire truck had been fixed up in the early 1970's by some of the volunteers at one of our stations. They ran it proudly in parades for a number of years, but it was showing its age. We tinkered with it on and off through the 1980's and 90's, making it to as many 4th of July parades as mechanically possible. One year I had to use four cans of "fix a flat" on one of the rear tires to get to the parade. A few years back, I got permission from our Town Board to put a new radiator and tires on it. As long as I had the tires off, I blasted and painted the wheels with Ferrari Red, (Rosso Corsa) PPG single stage paint. Might just as well do it right, I thought. Well, paint-

ing the rims opened our eyes as to what the old fire truck could look like with a full restoration. I was asked by my Town Board what it would take to "fix up" our little piece of Township history. So I gave them a figure on what I thought it would take to do a frame up restoration. They agreed to budget money over a two-year period. Myself and my crew stripped it down to the bare frame and started over. We did all the work in our shop, including body and paint, with the exception of chrome and upholstery. All the heavy iron was sandblasted, epoxy primed and painted black. The differential and transmission were disassembled, cleaned and inspected. Running gear was reassembled with new bearings and bushings as needed. A new



rebuilt engine was installed. This was actually a closed cab truck originally. The top, doors and back of the cab had been removed at one time, and a buggy seat installed. We replaced the fire wall and some of the sub rails which had been cracked from stress over the years. We sandblasted and epoxy primed all the sheet metal. High build primer was then used on the sheet metal and wet sanded. The fire apparatus box was commercially manufactured by the Childs Corporation, and was all hand crafted. We made a new 1-1/2" thick oak bed for it with locally cut rough lumber. We buffed out the brass pieces and cleared coated. We had other pieces rechromed. Fortunately almost all of the original fire equipment on the truck has stayed intact over the years. The ladder, lanterns, nozzles, hand crank siren, spotlight and chemical tank are all original to the truck. We added some of missing pieces like the two copper "Childs" fire extinguishers – eBay is a great place to shop.

We came up with a design for the 24kt gold leaf decoration and had a local graphics shop run it off for us.

A few years back I was working in my backyard here in town. Digging out some sod, I uncovered a series of old 1930's license plates standing up in rows. I found out that the people who lived in my house in the 1930's used old license plates to border their flower gardens. Two of the plates were original Breitung Township municipal license plates. Nobody here had ever seen one. I also found out the person that did my job as public works superintendent in the 1930's and 40's, use to live in the house next to me. What are the odds? Of course, we had to have one restored, and use it on the truck..

In the back of my mind I still wondered about the story of the truck coming from the Ford plant. I recently found the original title, and discovered that our Township had bought the chassis in 1940 for \$50 from a local salvage yard. Well, that kind of put the Ford plant story to rest. But where did the fire apparatus equipment come from? So I started researching our old Township Board Meeting minutes, starting from where the chassis was purchased in 1940, and going backwards. This is what I was able to document.



In 1930, Breitung Township, Quinnesec, Michigan, purchased a used 1923 Ford Model TT fire truck from the Ford Motor Company Body Plant in Kingsford, Michigan for \$325. The Ford plant replaced this fire truck with a new 1929 Model AA fire truck, which the City of Kingsford owns today (the second truck). The Model TT fire truck Breitung Township bought had a commercial fire apparatus box on it for carrying hose, ladders and equipment. It also had a 35 gallon chemical tank which used bicarbonate of soda and sulfuric acid. When the chemicals were mixed with water in the tank, upon arrival at a fire, it pressurized the tank and basically acted like a big fire extinguisher. A 1932 Breitung Township Fire Department inventory list shows the specific equipment on the truck, lanterns, ladder, hand crank siren etc.

The Model TT Fire truck from the Ford plant was used by Breitung Township from 1930 to 1940. In 1940 the Township decided to "upgrade" its old Model TT truck. It purchased a used 1930 Model AA truck chassis from Anderson's Auto Salvage in Kingsford for \$50 plus \$1 for a windshield. The apparatus box, chemical tank and equipment was transferred to the "new" used Model AA chassis. The 1930

truck with it's 1923 fire apparatus was stationed in Quinnesec, serving Breitung Township from 1940 to 1954. So the story of the truck coming from the Ford plant was partially true, the details just got lost. I recently uncovered two pictures of the Model TT Fire truck used at the Ford Plant. You can see the Childs apparatus box on it that matches to our truck today.

With the completion of the restoration, we've had nothing but thumbs up on a job well done.



